

CITY OF CORDOVA



December 8, 2003

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Darroll Hargraves, Chair
Local Boundary Commission
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1770
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3510

Local Boundary Commission

Dear Mr. Hargraves:

The issue of determining standards or criteria for consolidation of schools may be of such complexity as to require the advice of a financial advisor or social economist. What is the economy of scale for rural Alaskan school districts? We have never researched the matter. Although I think there must be some unbiased research out there.

Our local School District's opinion is based off of the position of the Associations of Alaska School Boards. They are fearful that forming a borough means losing local control for the current school boards. The concept of what is "local" in educational local control is nebulous. A borough is local control, albeit different than what we have now. They do not posit whether there are any benefits to creating a borough.

The City of Cordova is less worried about sharing power to a regional organization than it is in finding a broader revenue base to provide a standard of service to its citizens. A broad base is inherently stable and diverse. Each community that would make up the Prince William Sound Borough could bring their individual strengths to form a broad base and diversified economy. Our lifestyles and needs are recognized and tied to the characteristics of life in Prince William Sound.

Given the current poor economy in Cordova and the State's direction to continually divest responsibility for services or the funding for locally provided state services, consolidation or regionalization of some services seem inevitable. Consolidation is a natural process when a system needs to become more efficient and strong. The dictionary well defines consolidation.

The only guidance we can give you is that consolidation might best occur when the local school reaches a point it cannot afford to provide a certain standard of education. That requires a results based test.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Hahn
City Manager